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ABSTRACT

Part of a resource package designed to assist local education agency personnel in improving the quality of instruction and services to students with special needs enrolled in vocational education programs, the second of nine instructor guides examines the process of identifying and referring the student who is having difficulty adjusting to the instructional program. Steps for determining the local education agency's procedures for student identification and referral are suggested, and guidelines for developing such procedures are presented. Included are a complete form and an outline on district procedures for identifying students with special needs, completed and blank student referral forms, federal guidelines for identifying disadvantaged and handicapped persons, and federal definitions of handicapping conditions. (SBH)

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INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFYING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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INTRODUCTION

Some students may be able to succeed in a vocational education program with relative ease. Many may need a mixture of extra instruction and encouragement from the instructor if they are to "make it." A few students, however, may have physical, emotional, social or learning difficulties which limit their opportunities for program success. For these few, the instructor may find it necessary to alert other professionals (e.g., counselor, administrator) to these difficulties in order to determine the special assistance needed to ensure student achievement. The purpose of this guide is to assist the vocational instructor in determining the process used within her or his school for initiating and verifying the need of the student for special supportive services. This process is commonly referred to as student identification and referral.

GUIDELINES AND CONSIDERATIONS

The following considerations offer several procedures and suggestions to enable you to become familiar with the student identification and referral process in your school, or, if necessary, to design one for your vocational program.

1. Review existing identification criteria, procedures and forms used for referring the special student in your district. This first step should serve to avoid any unnecessary duplication of effort. If, however, you find the district does not have an established identification-referral process, the example documents in this guide may be helpful to both you and your school district.

2. Example Document #1 provides a completed version of an instrument used by an instructor to determine the student identification-referral procedures within her district. A blank copy of this instrument can be found in Example Document #2. You may want to use this tool while doing your search. Perhaps the best place to start this activity is by contacting your immediate supervisor.

3. Example Document #3 provides a completed version of an identification-referral form for the student with special needs. In some cases, parents or agencies from outside the school system (e.g., Juvenile Court, Department of Social Services) may know of a student with special needs and recommend to school officials that a referral be initiated. In most instances, however, instructors or other school personnel (e.g., counselor, principal, student) will initiate the referral. A blank copy of the identification-referral form can be found in Example Document #4.

4. Once the student identification-referral form is completed, it must be submitted to the appropriate person for action. This person could be the special needs resource manager, the counselor, the building administrator or the director of special education, depending on your local school organization. Whoever this person is, she or he must have the responsibility and authority for seeing that the referral is acted upon.

5. The person responsible for acting on your student referral form will likely contact you for further information about the student's performance. Procedures for obtaining and recording student performance data are offered in Guide 3.

6. Since the state department requires certain identification information from the district in order to reimburse the district for serving students with special needs, your administrator may ask you to identify the number of handicapped and disadvantaged students presently enrolled in your program. Therefore, you may want to consider the identification criteria specified by the Department of Vocational Education in your state as well. It is quite common for a state to adopt the definitions and criteria established at the federal level. Example Document #5 presents the federal criteria for the identification of handicapped and disadvantaged students enrolled in programs receiving vocational education funds. Even though most states have adopted the federal guidelines, it would be wise to check your state department's criteria, just in case a discrepancy does exist between federal and state identification requirements.

7. If you are unfamiliar with the federal categories and definitions of handicapping conditions, such as learning disabilities or health impaired, Example Document #6 provides a further explanation of each.

FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

For additional information on the topic of identifying special needs learners in vocational education see:

Albright, Len and Phelps, L. Allen. Teaching Special Needs Students: A New Challenge. Industrial Education, October, 1977. Pages 26-31.

Boldrey, Tom. Joliet Identifies by Computer. School Shop, April, 1978. Pages 72-73.

Brolin, Donn. Vocational Preparation of Retarded Citizens. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1976. (See Chapter 13 for sample identification-referral forms.)

Phelps, L. Allen and Lutz, Ronald J. Career Exploration and Preparation for the Special Needs Learner. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1977. (See Chapter 6.)

Phelps, L. Allen and Wentling, Tim L. A Proposed System for the Identification, Assessment and Evaluation of Special Needs Learners. Journal of Industrial Teacher Education, Spring, 1977. Pages 19-35.

EXAMPLE DOCUMENT #1

District Procedures for Identifying
Students with Special Needs
in Vocational Education

Date: 9/25/77

The purpose of this instrument is to record the procedures used for identifying students with special needs being considered for, or enrolled in, vocational education programs within your school. The following instructions should be reviewed before using this instrument:

1. The student identified as having "special needs" by the instructor is usually classified in one of two categories by the school system, handicapped or disadvantaged. The procedures for identifying and referring handicapped students in your district may be different than those used for disadvantaged learners. Therefore, separate reference is given to each group on this instrument.

2. Although the handicapped and disadvantaged are presented separately on this instrument, the items to consider under each category are the same. A description of each category is listed below:

   a. "Criteria" refers to the standards by which students with special needs are identified in vocational education. For instance, the criteria used within your school may be based on the federal and/or state criteria or they may differ. In each case specify what the criteria are.

   b. "Referral Procedures" simply means <u>how</u> referrals are to be made and to <u>whom</u>.

   c. "Eligibility Process" refers to the method(s) used to determine the extent to which the reported student's handicap or disadvantage interferes with successful participation in vocational education. For example, formalized testing may be used in determining the eligibility of the student with special needs. In this case, you would want to indicate what test(s) is (are) being used, who receives information on the results of this testing and the type of information offered.

   d. "Contact Personnel" is the person or persons responsible for determining the eligibility of the referred student for special services and for passing this information on to instructors.

Identification of Handicapped Students

The following information applies to:

X all vocational programs

_____ some vocational programs (specify which)_____

_____

_____

Criteria - Based on state criteria and similar to the federal classification scheme in Example Documents # 5.

Referral Procedures - 1) Parents, administrator, teacher or student submits a written referral form to the counselor. 2) Parents are notified of referral and must give permission for further evaluation. 3) Evaluation occurs. 4) A staffing conference with parents and student is held.

Eligibility Process - Classroom observations; parent, student and instructor interviews; background and record review; physical examination and psychological assessments when appropriate.

Contact Personnel - Psychologist in conjunction with building counselor and special education administrator along with parental consent.

Identification of Disadvantaged Students

The following information applies to:

__X__ all vocational programs

_____ some vocational programs (specify which)_____

_____

_____

Criteria - Student must have an academic and/or economic disadvantage, as defined by state criteria, which in our case is the same as the federal requirements.

Referral Procedures - Parents, instructor, social worker, administrator, a student can make a referral on an informal basis (e.g. telephone call, conference with the counselor) but most are made through formal written referral to the vocational counselor.

Eligibility Process - Classroom observations; interview with student, parents and instructor(s); parent application for free lunch program; review student performance during past three years, particularly in the math and reading areas.

Contact Personnel - Vocational Education Director and Counselor

What sources were used to obtain the information requested on this form?

Handicapped: Special Education Director and Building Principal

Disadvantaged: Vocational Counselor

EXAMPLE DOCUMENT #2

District Procedures for Identifying
Students with Special Needs
in Vocational Education

Date: _____

The purpose of this instrument is to record the procedures used for identifying students with special needs being considered for, or enrolled in, vocational education programs within your school. The following instructions should be reviewed before using this instrument:

1. The student identified as having "special needs" by the instructor is usually classified in one of two categories by the school system, handicapped or disadvantaged. The procedures for identifying and referring handicapped students in your district may be different than those used for disadvantaged learners. Therefore, separate reference is given to each group on this instrument.

2. Although the handicapped and disadvantaged are presented separately on this instrument, the items to consider under each category are the same. A description of each category is listed below:

   a. "Criteria" refers to the standards by which students with special needs are identified in vocational education. For instance, the criteria used within your school may be based on the federal and/or state criteria or they may differ. In each case specify what the criteria are.

   b. "Referral Procedures" simply means <u>how</u> referrals are to be made and to <u>whom</u>.

   c. "Eligibility Process" refers to the method(s) used to determine the extent to which the reported student's handicap or disadvantage interferes with successful participation in vocational education. For example, formalized testing may be used in determining the eligibility of the student with special needs. In this case, you would want to indicate what test(s) is (are) being used, who receives information on the results of this testing and the type of information offered.

   d. "Contact Personnel" is the person or persons responsible for determining the eligibility of the referred student for special services and for passing this information on to instructors.

Identification of Handicapped Students

The following information applies to:

_____ all vocational programs

_____ some vocaticnal programs (specify which)_____

_____

_____

Criteria -

Referral Procedures -

Eligibility Process -

Contact Personnel -

Identification of Disadvantaged Students

The following information applies to:

_____ all vocational programs

_____ some vocational programs (specify which)_____

_____

_____

Criteria -

Referral Procedures -

Eligibility Process -

Contact Personnel -

What sources were used to obtain the information requested on this form?

Handicapped:

Disadvantaged:

EXAMPLE DOCUMENT #3

Student Referral Form
Vocational Education

Student's Name: Mike Philips Grade: 11 Date: 9/19/77
School: West High

Person Initiating the Referral: Fred Davis
Title: Instructor - Building Trades

Please Specify the Reason for this Referral: Although Mike does well on performance activities in the lab and appears very interested in the building trades field, he has experienced difficulty in reading the course text. Also, Mike does come from a broken home and lives with his mother. He has often talked about the need for getting a job to help pay the family bills.

Special Services Presently Received: None that I am aware of.

Received By: J. Zack Title: Counselor Date: 9/20/77

Action Taken: Met with Mike and Mr. Davis individually. A staffing with Mr. Davis, the special needs program coordinator, the remedial reading teacher and the special education resource teacher will be held on 9/30/77 to examine the reading problem in greater detail and also to determine if special work/study funds are a possibility for Mike to help ease the family financial picture.

EXAMPLE DOCUMENT #4

Student Referral Form
Vocational Education

Student's Name:_____ Grade:_____Date:_____

School:_____

Person Initiating the Referral:_____

Title:_____

Please Specify the Reason for this Referral:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Special Services Presently Received:_____

_____

Received By:_____Title:_____Date:_____

Action Taken:

EXAMPLE DOCUMENT #5

Federal Guidelines for Identifying Disadvantaged and Handicapped Persons in Vocational Education Programs

Identification of a Disadvantaged Person

Definition - Persons (other than handicapped persons) who have academic or economic disadvantages, including persons who have limited English-speaking ability, and who require special services, assistance or programs in order to enable them to succeed in vocational education programs (Final Rules and Regulations for the Vocational Education Amendments of 1976, Section 104.804, Federal Register, October 3, 1977).

Criteria - Academic disadvantage means that a person: 1) lacks reading and writing skills; 2) lacks mathematical skills; or 3) performs below grade level.

Economic disadvantage means: 1) family income is at or below national poverty level; 2) participant or parent(s) or guardian of the participant is unemployed; 3) participant or parent of participant is receiving public assistance; or 4) the participant is institutionalized or under State guardianship (Section 104.804, October 3, 1977).

The State shall use, to the maximum extent possible, the funds expended for disadvantaged and persons of limited English-speaking ability to enable these persons to participate in regular vocational education programs (Section 104.313, October 3, 1977).

Identification of a Handicapped Person

Definition - The term handicapped--means persons who are mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, or other health impaired, or persons with specific learning disabilities who by reason thereof require special education and related services, and who because of their handicapping condition, cannot succeed in the regular vocational education program without special education assistance or who require a modified vocational education program (Definitions, Appendix A, Federal Register, October 3, 1977).

Criteria - The (vocational education) program provided each handicapped child will be planned and coordinated in conformity with and as a part of the child's individualized educational program as required by the Education of the Handicapped Act (Section 104.182 (f), Federal Register, October 3, 1977).[1]

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[1]The individualized education program (IEP) is a written statement, developed by a team of persons, indicating the specific program plans for each handicapped student. This plan is to be completed on at least an annual basis. The procedures suggested throughout these documents are based on the individualized planning concept and are in accord with the mandated requirements of PL 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. The only difference is that the concept presented herein has been expanded to include both handicapped and disadvantaged persons in vocational education programs.

EXAMPLE DOCUMENT #6

Definitions of Handicapping Conditions According to Federal Statutes in Vocational and Special Education[1]

1. Deaf - means a hearing impairment which is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, which adversely affects educational performance.

2. Hard of hearing - means a hearing impairment, whether permanent or fluctuating, which adversely affects a child's educational performance but which is not included under the definition of "deaf" in this section.

3. Mentally retarded - means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.

4. Orthopedically impaired - means a severe orthopedic impairment which adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly (e.g., clubfoot, absence of some member, etc.), impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns which cause contractures).

5. Other health impaired - means limited strength, vitality or alertness, due to chronic or acute health problems such as a heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, or diabetes, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.

6. Seriously emotionally disturbed - is defined as follows:

   (i) The term means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affects educational performance:

---

[1] Taken from Final Rules and Regulations for PL 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, Section 121a.5, Federal Register, August 23, 1977.

(A) An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
(B) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
(C) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
(D) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or
(E) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

(ii) The term includes children who are schizophrenic or autistic. The term does not include children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they are seriously emotionally disturbed.

7. Specific learning disability - means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain disfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, of mental retardation, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

8. Speech impaired - means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.

9. Visually handicapped - means a visual impairment which, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partially seeing and blind children.